noble and godlike qualities of spiritual intelligences, that they are enabled and required to act for themselves. Were the freedom of their will interfered with, they would cease to be what they are, and would be stripped of one of their most exalted and distinguishing features.

To such creatures, their Creator would by some means or other give a law, with power to obey it if they so chose, but with freedom too to disobey it. Virtue is not virtue, properly speaking, when it is constrained. Every praiseworthy deed must be free and spontaneous. But it may be involved in the very nature of a state of freedom, that those who possess it are liable to abuse it. It is conceivable, then, that wherever there are responsible beings, there may also, on the part of some or many, be a disobedience to that law which the Creator hath prescribed as the rule of obedience. A condition of things in which such disobedience is impossible, may presuppose either that no freedom of will has been given, or that it is being interfered with. It is reasonable, no doubt, to suppose that this disobedience must be something of rare occurrence in the dominions of God; but that which is possible may be occurring somewhere, and there may be some individuals, or some races, who have fallen away from the purity in which they were created.

There is nothing unreasonable, then, in the idea that there may be a fallen world somewhere. The pride of the human heart may rebel against the very thought, that the race to which we belong can be thus degenerate. But it is surely not impossible that there may be a world which has thus lapsed into sin; and it is our duty to join the light which observation, reason, and man's moral nature furnish, in order to determine whether we may not be living in such a state of things.

A priori, it may seem as if the chances of our being in a spot-

less world were much greater than of our being in a fallen world ; but we have to do here, not with chances, but with realities— not with conjectural probabilities, but with facts. Judging *a priori*, the actual world is not such as we should suppose it likely that God would fashion. We must set aside our self-formed conceptions of what is probable, and taking things as they are, inquire what view the facts before our eyes, and revealed to our consciousness, give of this world and of its relation to its Governor.